The Builder.

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1850.

THE intention we announced last week of increasing the size of our journal from sixteen pages to twenty-four, *without altering the price*, is a better evidence of our thankfulness for the favour with which our efforts to render THE BUILDER worthy of its purpose and the times have been received, than any words could possibly be. The additional expense will be considerable (a thousand pounds a year at least), but we look ultimately to obtain a return for this, through the increased circulation that we may reasonably expect will follow. The advantages that will result to our readers will be great. Catering for several classes, we have constantly been compelled, by our limited space and the necessity of touching upon all the subjects of the week interesting to any of these classes, to condense or shorten valuable papers, and often to omit notice altogether of subjects of importance. This will now be obviated, and we shall, further, be in a position to enlarge our scope, and to provide our readers with much general information bearing upon their avocations, studies, and likings. We shall be able to give greater space for reviews of books, reports of cognate trials, descriptions of useful inventions and discoveries, and essays on various branches of art, than we could hitherto afford; and in various other ways we expect to be able to minister to the pleasure and profit of our readers, to promote the interests of society, and to increase the efficiency of our journal. We shall, at all events, earnestly strive to do so, and we ask at all hands assistance and consideration.

We propose, amongst other new features, to give, at intervals, a series of portraits of leading Architects and Engineers, with memoirs and lists of their works. Our ordinary illustrations will, as heretofore, include ancient examples, practical details, and modern works, both at home and abroad. In the latter departments, we may venture to refer to the contents of the present volume as an earnest of the future. In this we have given views and particulars, amongst other recent buildings, of the New House of Commons, as originally finished (by Barry); the Brighton Dispensary (Williams); the Artizans' Home, Whitechapel (Beck); the Bentinck Memorial, Nottingham (Hine); St. Peter's Hospital, Wandsworth (Suter); Kneller Hall Training School (Mair); the Friends' School, Bristol (Armstrong); Gloucester Savings Bank (Medland); Northampton Bank (Law); St. Aidan's College, Birkenhead (Wyntt and Brandon); the Nelson Monument (Railton); Surrey County Prison (Hill); St. Stephen's, Hammersmith (Salvin); Interior of Ware Church (the Editor); Railway Station, Bruges (Payen); Trinity Schools, Margate (Caveler); Worsley Hall, Manchester (E. Blore); Almshouse, Boston, U. S. (Dwight and Bryant); Cliefden House (Barry); Prince Woronzow's Residence (E. Blore); Chapel of Consumption Hospital (Lamb); Hornby Castle (Sharpe and Paley); a Manchester Warehouse (Gregan); the '51 Exhibition Building (Paxton); St. John's Schools, Liverpool (Hay); Vinters, Maidstone (Richardson); All Saints, Thirkleby (Lamb); Interior of St. Mary's, Brompton (the Editor); the "Rumeshalle," Munich (Von Klenze); Bury Athenæum, &c. (S. Smirke); Independent Chapel, Boston (Lewis); Interior of St. Stephen's, Westminster (Ferrey); Cloughanodfoy Castle, Ireland (G. F. Jones); the Convent of Sisters of Mercy, at Cork (Atkins); Exeter Hall roof (Dankes); St. Boniface, Munich, (Ziebland); and the Wesleyan Normal College, Westminster (by Wilson).

Of our intention to maintain the character of our journal in this respect, we shall afford immediate proof by presenting to our subscribers, with the first number for the new year (in addition to illustrations of St. Stephen's, Walbrook), what we expect will be a fine view of the interior of the great Building in Hyde-park, now being prepared for the '51 Exhibition. The plan and external appearance of this we have already illustrated; and, as we were the first to lay before the public the design for the building originally issued by the committee of architects and engineers, so also shall we be first to publish a correct view of the interior of Mr. Paxton's edifice, which, notwithstanding some—what we must still consider—dangerous weaknesses, demanding grave consideration and revision, is one of the most extraordinary works of the age. Our view will be as large as two pages of THE BUILDER, and will be printed on separate paper.

When the Exhibition opens we shall not fail to make our readers acquainted with all matters there exposed which are likely to interest them.* It will be the event of the year, and an event that will distinguish the year from all that have preceded it:† we shall seek to glean from it all that will tend to the improvement of dwellings, the advancement of art, the welfare of the masses, and the general progress of mankind.

There will be many other things to do, too. The window-tax must be beaten off, and sanitary measures carried forward; the advancement of the Operative must be cared for; freedom of thought in architecture advocated; and inventors be enabled cheaply to secure the results of their ingenuity by a reformation of the patent laws. We are prepared to play our part, if not efficiently, at least with honesty and zeal, in what will doubtless prove a stirring and momentous year; and we solicit the co-operation of all who feel with us the vast importance of the interests at stake.

GEORGE GODWIN.

NORTH LONDON SCHOOL OF DRAWING AND MODELLING.—An interesting exhibition of works of fine and industrial art, contributed from private collections, has been opened by the committee of the above school.

* The Metropolitan Sectional Committees have all finished their duties. Many of the members of these committees have worked very hard, having been occupied for days in trailing claimants, to ascertain the propriety or otherwise of granting the space asked for. In Class 28, "Manufactures in Mineral Substances," and 30, "Fine Arts" (doubtless also in others), many of the claims have been cancelled, because the applicants were unable, or failed, to give the committees an opportunity of judging of the fitness or otherwise of the works proposed to be exhibited. An appeal to the committee of chairmen by any one of those who now find themselves able to rectify the omission, might still be useful. The total floor and counter space allotted to the metropolis is 72,982 feet.

† The stir abroad is very considerable. A friend, writing us from *Lille*, says,—"Everybody is curious here to obtain any information about the Exhibition of 1851. The cost of travelling to London, from Lille by Dunkirk,—railway, steamer, &c.—is only about 13s.; so that *all* the *Lillois* purpose seeing London before they die. Industry is setting art an example which she ought to profit by. I strongly suspect that our English artists, sculptors, &c., who are unknown to foreigners, are quite capable of competing with the works of continental artists. I believe that the English school of painting has never yet played truant to the school of nature, as many on this side of the water have done. It will be refreshing to the lovers of art to meet with works different from the exaggerated styles to be met with in France."

ON THE PAINTING OF THE BUILDING IN THE PARK.

I WOULD offer a few remarks upon a matter which is just at this moment exciting some attention,—namely, the mode of decorating the great exhibition room now building in the Park. Since the downfall of Gothic architecture in this country, the art of decoration has neither been studied nor practised, except by those who have pursued it as a mere trade, and worked without principles or any knowledge of the fine arts to guide them. In other countries the subject has received more attention, and fallen into the hands of a class of men better qualified—the artists, instead of the mere ornamentalists: with us, therefore, decoration is an entirely new art. The subject will not admit of any extensive illustration in a brief notice of this sort, but it ought not to require much argument to prove that it is to the principles of art we must look for the principles of ornament, since *picture* is clearly but an exalted species of ornament, having the most ornate things of the creation for its objects, and the most complete processes for its means; and it is equally clear that the entire neglect of the study of the one must have left an incapacity for the practice of the other.

I observe that the subject of decoration has been discussed at a meeting of the Royal Institute of British Architects, but without producing any remarks calculated to throw light upon it. Mr. Owen Jones remarks, "If we examine the remains of the architecture of the ancients, we shall find everywhere that in the earlier periods the prevailing colours used in decoration were the *primaries*, blue, red, and yellow, the *secondaries* appearing very sparingly." This is just glancing at early art, fine or decorative, as we find it everywhere in its rude state, and affords no information whatever; and saying that, whether in picture, architectural, or personal decoration, in one part of the world or another, among barbarians a barbarous taste prevails! Both art and ornament very naturally begin in crude, unbroken colours, and in pursuing the history as well as the philosophy of the thing, we find them both to decline and end in a reckless and senseless combination, in which rules and principles are utterly confounded! An illustration of this truth is to be found everywhere in the course art and decoration have pursued, from the coloured diagrams of the earliest painters to the smudged daubings of the eighteenth century,—from the caves of Allora to the saloons of a London gin palace. It will always be more easy to deal with *three* colours than with ten, and to say that the first rude artists employed these three, instead of the more scientific mixtures, is not to furnish information, but to illustrate a fact known and proved by a thousand analogies.*

The recommendation to adopt the primary colours, blue, red, and yellow, in decoration of the building in question, is decidedly objectionable. It is proposed to use these crude colours in such "relative quantities as to neutralize and destroy each other: thus no one colour will be dominant and fatigue the eye." To effect this the relative forces given to them by Mr. Field are to be adopted, and they are to be employed in the harmonic ratio of 3, 5, and 8. Thus the hollows or concaves are to be painted with eight parts of blue, the flats with five parts of red, and the edges of things with three parts of yellow. This, it must be said, *looks* scientific, and appears the recognition of something like a principle, but while there is no other than the authority of rude and early times to recommend it, and no examples which have the slightest relation in character, it may very well be suspected. But let us see farther what is said. "As one of the objects of decorating a building, is to increase the effect of light and shade," &c. Now it is clear that taking this remark in its direct sense, the design of the

* It would lead us out of the track of our present remarks (unless, otherwise, we do it right by higher views) fully entering at the history and philosophy of art, to examine as we have so far the true principles of decoration; and how in proportion as this attribute of art were studied and practised, as certain periods of its progress and consummation, and how neglected and misunderstood in its decline, and the ruin brought upon it by the schism of the Bolognese school and its followers. The principles of effect practised by the earlier masters, that is, the attempt to produce effect by the mere alternation of colours, of lights and darks, distinct from what is understood by chiaroscuro, and practised in the lower schools of Italy, is a subject which has scarcely been touched upon by any of the artistic writers.